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Good afternoon Chairmen Fox and Coleman, Ranking Members Hetherington and Kissel, and Members of the Judiciary Committee. I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill Number 5488: An Act Concerning Risk Reduction Credits for Certain Criminal Offenses that Result in the Death of Another Person.

I would like to thank the Judiciary Committee for raising this important bill. I would also like to thank Representatives Hetherington and Lavielle for proposing this concept.

During the 2011 session, the General Assembly passed legislation permitting the Department of Corrections to establish an earned risk reduction credit program which essentially reduces inmates' sentences for good conduct, obedience to prison rules, and for participating in approved programming and activities. While this may be a useful program for some inmates, the House Republicans opposed the application of this program because it is available to many of our most hardened criminals. Only inmates sentenced for the following crimes are prohibited for early release: murder, capital felony, arson murder, 1st degree, aggravated sexual assault or home invasion. Sex offenders, child molesters, kidnappers, robbers, and many other violent criminals are eligible to participate in the early release program.

The House Republican Caucus proposed legislation this session to ban violent offenders from participating in the early release program. The bill before you today, HB 5488, would limit persons who have committed crimes that have resulted in the death of another person from participating in the early release program. We certainly support this proposal, and we would like to see it expanded to also limit persons who have committed violent crimes from participating. Criminals who have committed heinous crimes should not be rewarded for good behavior nor should they be released to the public prior to the completion of their full sentences. We owe it to the victims of these crimes to see that these criminals face their full punishment.

I urge the Judiciary Committee to pass House Bill 5488. Thank you for your consideration of this legislation, and I look forward to the opportunity to debate this bill with the full General Assembly.

Thank you.